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CONSUMER TIME R-41

NETWORK: NBC DATE: April 4, 1942

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Produced by Consumers' Counsel Division of the Department of Agriculture, and presented in cooperation with United States Government agencies working for consumers.

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1. ANNOUNCER: This is CONSUMER TIME.

2. SOUND: CASH REGISTER - CLOSE DRAWER

3. NANCY: That's your money buying food.

4. SOUND: CASH REGISTER

5. REPORTER: That's your money paying for a home.

6. SOUND: CASH REGISTER

7. NANCY: That's your money buying clothes and the thousands of other things you need.

8. REPORTER: That's you . . paying for these things . . money out of your pockets.

9. SOUND: CASH REGISTER - CLOSE DRAWER

10. REPORTER: Are you getting the most for your money. Is it buying you the strength and health and courage that will mean victory for the American way?

11. VERNON: Each week at this hour CONSUMER TIME brings you facts that will make your pennies and dollars go farther and bring you more of the things that you and all Americans need. This program is produced by your Consumers' Counsel in the Department of Agriculture, and is presented in cooperation with United States Government agencies working for consumers.

12. REPORTER: One of those Government agencies that cooperate in presenting this program is the Consumer Division in the Office of Price Administration, and today we're glad to have the director of that division here in the studio with us again. You heard his voice last week on CONSUMER TIME, and now we're asking him to speak to us again. Mr. Dan West ---!

13. WEST: And I'm mighty glad to be asked too, since I have something pretty important to talk about - consumer centers right in your own home town. A place where you and your neighbors can get the facts on food prices - or your local housing situation - or the quality of the things you buy. And just to show you how you can organize such a center, I'd like to tell you about one that was started by someone you all know - that smart young inquiring consumer, Mrs. Evelyn Freyman.

14. FREYMAN: Oh, now Mr. West ---!

15. WEST: You are the guiding spirit of your local consumer center, Mrs. Freyman. Why it might never have come into being except for you.

16. FREYMAN: For a while there I thought it never would get started. We certainly had a struggle!

17. WEST: Well, suppose you tell us just how the struggle started. I wasn't in at the beginning.

18. FREYMAN: Well, I'd read in the newspapers about consumer centers - how they were springing up all over the country - and I felt we ought to have one in our town. So I went next door to talk it over with Mother Miles ---

19. SOUND: FADE IN BROOM SWEEPING.

20. MOTHER M: You don't mind if I go on sweeping, do you?

21. FREYMAN: No, but ---

22. MOTHER M: I agree with you, Evelyn.- we do all need to learn about rationing - and conservation, and how to buy wisely. But I doubt if you'd ever get the folks in this town to form a consumer center. You know how hard it is to get any real community project started around here.

23. FREYMAN: Well, we won't do it just pushing a rboom around our own kitchens - that's a cinch!

24. SOUND: SWEEPING STOPS.

25. MOTHER M: You mean me?

26. FREYMAN: I mean we've got to use that broom to sweep away differences - all the petty jealousies that make people - and nations - pull apart. And we've got to sweep the cobwebs off the minds that are always closed to a new idea.

27. MOTHER M: Hm! Sounds like a job for the street cleaning department.

28. FREYMAN: It's a job for our Defense Council - a real war job. And I want you to go right down there with me now and tell them so.

29. MOTHER M: Evelyn - I can't! Not in this apron!

30. FREYMAN: Just slip your coat on over it. Nobody'll see you.

31. MOTHER M: Can't we go tomorrow?

32. FREYMAN: That's just why the world's in the mess it is today - putting things off till tomorrow. Come on - get your coat ---

(PAUSE)

33. SMITH: (FADING IN) But ladies - I don't think there's any interest in a consumer center for this town.

34. FREYMAN: There probably wouldn't be any interest in air-raid wardens either - if your council didn't get them organized.

35. MOTHER M: That's right, Mr. Smith. We've got to stir up interest in a consumer center.

36. SMITH: Well, I don't see that it's the job of the local Defense Council to do that.

37. FREYMAN: Other Defense Councils are making it part of their job.

38. SMITH: But we don't have a consumer committee in our council.

39. FREYMAN: Well, suppose we women should form such a committee,.,.

40. MOTHER M: Yes, if we could get representatives from all the different organizations the Federated Women's Clubs - and the P.T.A. ---

41. FREYMAN: And the Negro Women's Club - and the Council of Jewish Women ---

42. MOTHER M: And the labor unions and their women's auxiliaries ---

43. SMITH: Hey - you don't expect to get all those people to agree on anything, do you?

44. MOTHER M: We can try.

45. FREYMAN: And if we do get them to agree. Then would the Defense Council give us their support?

46. SMITH: Well, if you can prove that we need a consumer center for the defense of the community ---

46A. FREYMAN: Thank you, Mr. Smith. That's all we want to know.

47. SMITH: But remember - you'll have to prove it.

48. FREYMAN: We will, Mr. Smith. Goodbye.

49. SMITH: (FADING) Good day, ladies.

50. SOUND: OFFICE DOOR CLOSES.

51. MOTHER M: Evelyn - how on earth are we going to prove that a consumer center is necessary for the defense of the whole town?

52. FREYMAN: Just the way you suggested. We're going to get leaders from all the different women's organizations to back it.

53. MOTHER M: But where do we start?

54. FREYMAN: Might as well tackle the biggest ones first. I'll phone Mrs. John Prentiss and tell her we'd like to talk to her.

55. MOTHER M: Mrs. John Prentiss! Do you think she would?

56. FREYMAN: I don't know why not. She might even invite us to tea.

57. MOTHER M: Goodness! I will have to change my dress!

(PAUSE)

58. SOUND: FADE IN TINKLE OF TEACUPS. TEA POURING.

59: PRENTISS: Sugar, Mrs. Freyman?

60. FREYMAN: One, please.

61. PRENTISS: Mrs. Miles?

62. MOTHER M: Just half a lump. You can save the rest.

63. PRENTISS: Oh, I don't think I've any need for a half a lump of sugar. You might as well take a whole one. Just don't stir it up.

64. MOTHER M: But sugar's getting scarce. Why, I heard on CONSUMER TIME ---

65. FREYMAN: That's one of the things we wanted to talk to you about, Mrs. Prentiss. We're afraid that the home-front defense problem in this war is more serious than many people realize. And if your club members would back such a project.

66. PRENTISS: But we already are doing war work, Mrs. Freyman. We have a Red Cross Instructor teaching us bandaging - and we have a motor corps ---

67. FREYMAN: But the real home front - learning how to plan wholesome meals for our families - and how to make our woolens wear longer - and how to know values when we're buying sheets ---

68. PRENTISS: Oh, I don't think our club would have any time for that sort of thing, Mrs. Freyman. We're too busy working on the big jobs.

69. MOTHER M: Seems to me this is one of the biggest jobs in the whole war.

70. PRENTISS: Well, really, I don't believe our members would be particularly interested in such a program of study. Why don't you suggest it to Mrs. Barnes? Her club is more the home-maker type.

71. FREYMAN: But we want to get all the women's organizations together - and make this a community project, with a center that will supply information ---

72. PRENTISS: Sorry, but I really don't see any need for such a thing. But perhaps - if you try Mrs. Barnes ---

73. BARNES: (FADING IN) Yes, indeed, Mrs. Freyman. I certainly am interested in what's going to happen to us here at home.

74. MOTHER M: Oh, Mrs. Barnes ---!

75. FREYMAN: And you say your club is already studying what the war is doing to the things people buy?

76. BARNES: It's our spring project. (TURNING OFF MIKE) In fact, I think I have some of our study material right here on this table..... Yes - here's a leaflet on canned goods ---

77. FREYMAN: Could I see it?

78. BARNES: (COMING ON) Surely. It tells just what you should have on your pantry shelf in case something happens.

79. FREYMAN: But - why this is hoarding!

80. BARNES: Oh, no - it's just being prepared.

81. FREYMAN: Do you mind my asking where you got this leaflet?

82. BARNES: Why there's a big consumer organization that sends us our material. They send some to the schools, too- for the children to study. They're specialists on consumers.

83. FREYMAN: But no <u>real</u> consumer specialist would recommend <u>this</u>, Mrs. Barnes. This is scare-buying. It's just the sort of thing that makes prices go up.

84. BARNES: You must be mistaken, Mrs. Freyman.

85. FREYMAN: I'm afraid it's you who's mistaken.

86. BARNES: I beg your pardon!

87. FREYMAN: Somehow, Mrs. Barnes, you've been taken in. Someone is deliberately feeding you bad advice.

88. BARNES: I believe that I'm capable of judging that.

89. FREYMAN: Then why don't you compare what this leaflet says with what the government tells us?

90. BARNES: Tells you what, for instance?

91. FREYMAN: Just what I've said. You shouldn't stock up a lot of foods you can't use. That only makes prices go up, and keeps foods from a lot of people who can't afford higher prices.

92. BARNES: Well, I'm quite satisfied with the material we have, Mrs. Freyman..... (FADING) And now I'm afraid I'm due at a meeting ---

(PAUSE)

93. FREYMAN: And so it went - one woman after another turning us down. Most of them just weren't interested. They didn't realize how everything we buy and use is terribly important in war - and they didn't seem to care. So finally we went back to see Mr. Smith at the Defense Council and ---

(FADES OFF)

94. MOTHER M: Mr. Smith - we've got to get some publicity for this thing.

95. FREYMAN: We've got to make the women of this town realize that being good consumers is as important to winning this war as being good soldiers - or good factory workers.

96. SMITH: But Mrs. Freyman - if it were so important, I should think the women would realize it.

97. FREYMAN: They're not awake to it - that's all.

98. MOTHER M: If we could get some publicity - explaining why we need a consumer center ---

99. SMITH: Sorry, but the Defense Council has much more important things to tend to ---

100. FREYMAN: But Mr. Smith ---

101. SOUND: TELEPHONE RINGS

102. SMITH: Why don't you go home and forget the whole thing.

103. SOUND: TELEPHONE RINGS AGAIN

104. SMITH: Pardon me, ladies.

105. SOUND: PHONE LIFTED

106. SMITH: Defense Council - Smith talking.... Oh, yes, Mrs. Prentiss.

107. MOTHER M: (SOTTO) Mrs. Prentiss!

108. SMITH: Well, I'm sorry, Mrs. Prentiss, but I don't know anything about the sugar situation.... Yes, of course I know it's scarce, but ---... You couldn't get any at all?.... Well, I don't know what we can do about it.... Well, I'm sorry, Mrs. Prentiss....

109. FREYMAN: Here - let me talk to her.

110. SMITH: But ---

111. FREYMAN: Hello. Mrs. Prentiss? This is Mrs. Freyman.... You remember - I came to see you, with Mrs. Miles...? Well, I wonder if we could come over and see you now.... I think we can help with this sugar question.... Yes - Yes - right away....

(PAUSE)

112. PRENTISS: (FADING IN, AFLUTTER) I don't know what I'm going to do! No sugar! And here I'm expecting company for dinner ---!

113. MOTHER M: I can let you have some, Mrs. Prentiss. I've got a couple of pounds ---

114. PRENTISS: Well, that's awfully kind of you --- Imagine - not a speck of sugar in any store in town.

115. MOTHER M: Probably lots of people have been hoarding it.

116. PRENTISS: They have. Mrs. Barnes has two hundred pounds.

117. FREYMAN: Two hundred!

118. PRENTISS: Yes - she says that her pamphlets advised her to stock up on sugar, so she went around to all the stores and bought all she could.

119. MOTHER M: But sugar is war material! We need it to make explosives. And anyone who takes more than her share ---

120. FREYMAN: We can't expect everyone to understand that, Mother Miles - when we don't have a consumer center to tell them the facts ---

121. PRENTISS: Well, if your consumer center will prevent this sort of thing, Mrs. Freyman, I'm all for it!

122. FREYMAN: You are?

123. PRENTISS: Absolutely. And I think I can promise that all my club members would be for it too.

124. FREYMAN: Oh, that's wonderful!

125. MOTHER M: But how are we going to organize it - if the Defense Council won't help us?

126. FREYMAN: That's right.... I was reckoning without Mr. Smith.

127. PRENTISS: But I should think the Government might be interested in something like this. Aren't they talking of rationing sugar?

128. FREYMAN: Why, of course! The very thing!

129. MOTHER M: You mean - the Government in Washington?

130. FREYMAN: Sure - the Office of Price Administration. I'm going right to them and ask the Consumer Division for help. (FADES OFF)

131. SOUND: FADE IN OFFICE SOUNDS.

132. FREYMAN: And so - Mr. West - I've come to you.

133. WEST: Well, I have a little booklet here, Mrs. Freyman, prepared by our Consumer Division just for people like you. on organizing consumer centers.

134. FREYMAN: That's just what we need.

135. WEST: It tells here why such centers are necessary - the services they'll perform for your community - and how you can get them started.

136. FREYMAN: Fine. What's the first step?

137. WEST: Well, first I think you ought to call a conference of the leaders in your town - presidents of your various women's organizations ---

138. FREYMAN: But that's what's so hard. They won't get together on this.

139. WEST: I think they might - if you make them understand it's a war measure - absolutely necessary for home defense.

140. FREYMAN: But I've tried ---

141. WEST: Since the sugar trouble?

142. FREYMAN: No, but ---

143. WEST: Try hanging your conference on that issue - something that's hot news - really vital to them. Put a notice in your local paper - telling that a consumer center will help them to conserve sugar - and will explain about rationing and price control - and suggest ways to stretch their sugar supplies.

144. FREYMAN: Yes - that might bring them ---

145. WEST: And you might have a speaker at your conference - someone who can explain things.

146. FREYMAN: Perhaps you would come.

147. WEST: Well, as a matter of fact, Mrs. Freyman, I expect to be in your town two weeks from today, and if you could arrange your conference for that afternoon ---

148. FREYMAN: I could! I'll go right home now and start things going. With the Government behind me, I ought to be able to round up most of the women in town!

(PAUSE)

149. SOUND: BUZZING OF WOMEN, BLENDING INTO APPLAUSE. THEN GRADUAL QUIET

150. SOUND: SLIGHT APPLAUSE

151. FREYMAN: (SLIGHTLY OFF MIKE - PROJECTING) And now I'd like to present our speaker, who will explain to us just what a consumer center is - and how it works. Mr. Dan West - Director of the Consumer Division of the Office of Price Administration in Washington.

152. SOUND: APPLAUSE, LONGER AND LOUDER

153. WEST: Explaining the purpose of a consumer center isn't as easy as it sounds, because that purpose varies a good deal from town to town - depending upon the needs of the people. But there are some needs that are shared by all of us consumers in every section of the country.

For one thing, we need to know about the progress of the war program as it affects us, right in our homes - the things like washing machines, that we're going to have to learn to do without - and how we can do without them. Then too we need to know what materials are limited - and how to conserve them. Like rubber - and I believe there was some talk around here of a slight lack of sugar.

154. SOUND: WOMEN TITTER

155. WEST: Another thing we need to know - especially in times like these, when prices are going up - is the quality of the goods we're buying. For example, some weeks ago, the

(MORE)

Government said that manufacturers had to put labels on their muslin sheets . . labels that indicated the quality of those sheets. The labels were for your protection, and had to be left on the sheets until the retailer got them. These labels should not be taken off by the retailers. And, since those labels were put on for your protection, you ought to insist that they stay right on the sheets until you buy them.

This is the kind of information that a good consumer center should be ready to pass out. And more besides. A good consumer center will help you buy good nourishing food for your families at a low cost - and help you manage your budgets so that you get the best possible living for your money. And you should set up a price watching committee - have the women keep track of the prices of <u>everything</u> they buy - to see which stores are raising prices the most. These facts may come in very handy soon. Or, you may want to organize a community canning project - or a plan to provide hot lunches for the school children in your town - or plan to get penny milk for them. In all those projects, you will need a consumer center to help you protect yourselves against high prices and to provide you with facts and suggestions - pamphlets, books, materials ---

(FADES OFF)

156. FREYMAN: (ON CUE) Well, that's the way it started - the consumer center in our town. But I doubt if we could ever have gotten it going without the help of Mr. West here.

157. WEST: Oh, if I couldn't have come that day, Mrs. Freyman, there were other people in the Consumer Division who would have. The Office of Price Administration has representatives all over this country who will be glad to help the people in their region form consumer centers. In fact, if there are any consumers listening who are interested in forming centers in their own towns, we'll be glad to send them a copy of that booklet.

158. FREYMAN: That same booklet you gave me - telling how to start a center - and what kind of materials to have on hand - and where to get them?

159. WEST: That very same booklet. We'll be glad to send it to anyone who writes in. They can just address their requests to the Consumer Division - Office of Price Administration -- Washington, D. C.

160. FREYMAN: I'll bet you get plenty of requests. That booklet is needed in every community that wants to build a strong home front.

161. WEST: Correct.

162. ANNOUNCER: Next week CONSUMER TIME will bring you your Consumers' Counsel, Donald Montgomery, with the latest news on Government orders affecting consumers plus facts about -

163. JOHNNY: Victory Gardens.

164. ANNOUNCER: And ---

165. NANCY: Your coal supply.

166. ANNOUNCER: And now don't forget that free offer, If you'd like a booklet telling you how to start a consumer center in your town, write to the Consumer Division - Office of Price Administration - Washington, D. C., and ask for the booklet on consumer centers. Be sure to tell us your own name and address and the call letters of the radio station to which you are listening.

Taking part today were Nell Fleming, Nancy Ordway, Edythe Aymar, Whit Vernon, and John Flynn.

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